DOC Supports the Hundred Club

Commissioner Theresa C. Lantz has donated half of the money raised through the annual Commissioner’s Cup to the Hundred Club of Connecticut.

At the Club’s recent annual gathering, Commissioner presented a check for $1,500 to the organization president.

The Hundred Club provides financial assistance to the families of police officers, firefighters and corrections officers who lose their lives in the line of duty. During its 30 years of existence, the Club has aided the families of 95 police officers, 126 firefighters and 6 corrections officers who made the supreme sacrifice. Gifts totaling over $8,000,000 have been made to these families.

see 100% page 2

RT Modernization, A Team Effort

The Connecticut Department of Correction is investing in reforming our business processes and replacing the existing computer system with a new, state of the art system. This initiative will simplify your duties and reduce time to complete tasks. It will standardize and automate tasks eliminating the redundancies that the current processes and systems demand. In the future, all relevant DOC inmate information will be available instantaneously and viewable in several different ways tailored to your needs. Also, there will be a reduction in the number of paper documents and forms required.

To help accomplish this, we have brought together staff from various disciplines across the agency. This includes Correctional Officers, Correctional Counselors, Counselor Supervisors, Parole Officers, MIS Programmers, Database Administrators and Records Specialists along with qualified consultants. This group is called the Correctional Modernization Team (CMT).

The CMT is focussed on reviewing and recommending innovative changes to our current business processes.

see CMT page 3
100% Support from page 1

“I believe it is crucial that as an agency we support an organization such as this, that is going to insure the members of our correctional family are looked after,” said Commissioner Lantz.

The Hundred Club will provide the families of firefighters, police and correction officers an immediate death benefit of $10,000, a review of the fixed indebtedness of our new families and has the authority, where appropriate, to recommend to the board financial relief for individual families concerning heavy mortgage or other debt service payments. Each college student is eligible for up to $25,000 yearly for tuition and other educational expenses, four weeks of camp for every child between the ages of 5 and 16, each child receives a $200 U.S.Bond each year on his or her birthday, up to and including age 18, and a holiday greeting four times per year, on Thanksgiving, a turkey; at Christmas, a check for $750.00 to each widow and $250.00 for each child under 19 years of age; and boxes of candy on Valentine’s Day and Mother’s Day.

The Club also honored the Commissioner for her continuing support and ongoing membership. A plaque of appreciation was presented to her to the applause of the gathered membership. More information about the Hundred Club can be obtained through its website, http://www.hundredclubofct.org/index.html

Mayor Perez Visits Enfield CI

Hartford Mayor Eddie Perez visited students at Enfield Correctional Institution on Tuesday, September 30. Drawing from his personal experiences, Mayor Perez told his student audience that hard work and determination can overcome real challenges in life. Answering concerns raised by some of the students, Mayor Perez informed them that having to carry the stigma of one’s incarceration until you can prove yourself is not a reason for not trying. However, having passion for your work and an attainable plan with which to reach your goals will sustain you through the initial rough times, he added.

Students asked the Mayor a variety of questions ranging from employment to the community resources available to them. The discussion also touched upon ways in which the inmates could positively contribute to their communities upon discharge.

Keeping up With The Joneses

Congratulations to newly appointed Probation Officer Craig E. Jones Jr. who took part in the Court Support Services Division (CSSD) Probation Officer Graduation ceremony held on March 28, 2008 at the Maloney Center for Training and Staff Development. Jones is the son of Department of Correction Parole Manager Craig E. Jones, Sr.

Pictured are from left to right District 7 Senator John A. Kissel, Judicial Branch Executive Director William Carbone, Newly appointed Probation Officer Craig E. Jones Jr., DOC Parole Manager Craig E. Jones Sr., Chief Court Administrator Honorable Judge Barbara Quinn.
CMT Update from page 1

These changes are a required first step to delivering a future system that will specifically meet the needs of CT DOC. Business Process improvement is a joint effort accomplished by conducting facility site visits and meeting with various staff from all disciplines. The team meticulously documents current processes and the challenges faced by staff in their daily duties. The team brainstorms in collaboration with facility staff and develops insightful new ideas and solutions.

With input from facility staff, CMT has developed and implemented its first set of changes. A notable change is the Inmate Overview Sheet. This sheet contains a photo along with key information, such as the Risk and Need Scores, Special Management Concerns, Basic Demographics and Court/Transfer information. Initially the sheet was intended for Court and Routine Transfers to eliminate the redundancy of paperwork, ultimately saving staff time and material. A pilot program was conducted at Hartford CC in August 2008 with great success and positive feedback from facility staff, CTU and the Judicial Marshals. Statewide use of the form was initiated on September 15, 2008. Since implementation, several disciplines have utilized this sheet for additional purposes.

Currently the team is reviewing processes for Admitting and Releasing, Property, Classification, Pardon and Parole. The team will continue to make site visits, and meet with staff in these areas to further their goal.

The CMT project team wants your ideas and feedback. Please log on to the DOC Intranet Web Page to complete a survey on the inmate overview sheet. Look at the left side of the page under Main Menu and click on the Employee Bulletin Board link. Click on the CMT link. Under the title bar, click on Inmate Overview Survey. Click on the Click here for Survey option. This will bring you to a brief survey where you can give your suggestions/comments anonymously. We look forward to your comments. Our future is the enrichment of our people, processes and technology!

Winter Clothing Drive

As part of her requirements to earn her Bachelor’s degree from the School of Human Services at Springfield College in Springfield, Massachusetts, Lieutenant Yadira Otero, and her classmates, have organized a winter clothing drive.

Now through November 17, staff members are being asked to donate, new and slightly used, winter hats, gloves and socks to benefit the House of Bread Day Shelter in Hartford. Boxes for the donations can be found in the main lobby of each facility.

Willard Cybulski Fundraiser
- On Friday, October 24, 2008, the WCCI QWL/EOQ Committee sponsored an Italian Luncheon for staff in memoriam of Reverend Jose Miralles. The committee members donated all the food and beverages. All of the proceeds raised, $635.00, were donated to his surviving family. He is and always will be in the hearts and prayers of his family here at WCCI.

Bridgeport CC Fundraiser
- Warden Ford would like to thank all Bridgeport CC staff for supporting a successful fundraiser for Officer Rhonda McNickels and Officer Teresa Binette-$1,212.00 was raised.

Congratulations
- Captain Stanley Parker, third shift commander at Osborn CI, recently observed his 21st anniversary of state service. Mr. Parker was hired on 7/17/87

Bridgeport CC Christmas Party

December 6, 2008
8:00 p.m. – 12:00 p.m.
$50.00 per person
Open Bar, Appetizers and Dinner

Anthony’s Ocean View Rest.
450 Lighthouse Road
New Haven, CT

For tickets: Captain Keel, C/O’s Daniels, Eason, D. Smith & P. Wilson or call 203-579-6131
College Fair Scheduled for Maloney

Location: Maloney Center for Training and Staff Development, Building #2

Date: November 12, 2008

Time: 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. & 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.

Representatives from the following institutions will attend:

Briarwood College
Capital Community College
Charter Oak State College
Tunxis Community College
Eastern Connecticut State Univ.
Manchester Community College
Connecticut Comm. College System

Mitchell College
Norwalk Comm. College
Post University
Saint Joseph College
University of Bridgeport
Naugatuck Valley Comm. College
University of Phoenix

There will also be a project manager from Allied Health and Smart Grants available for information along with a Workforce Development Coordinator from the Connecticut Community College System.

Please note that there will be no inmate workers on the premises; therefore we encourage staff to bring their family members that may be interested in attending college in the near future.

*** YOU MUST USE PERSONAL TIME TO ATTEND ***

For more information please contact:
CCS Heidi Palliardi at 203-271-5190

Condolences

Director Foltz is saddened to announce the passing of Mark A. Lemery, husband of Lisa Lemery.

Warden Strange and staff at Osborn C. I. are saddened to inform of the recent passing of the sister of Correctional Counselor Dennis Morgan, Tandy Denise Smith of Lakeland, Florida.

Director David Batten is saddened to announce the passing of GMO Stephen Lukaszewski’s son, Steven J. Lukas.

Donations in Steven’s memory may be made to:
Steve’s Memorial Fund
c/o Marc & Ruth Holly
P.O. Box 1303
Warren, MA 01083

Vermont- By state law all inmates can vote unless they have been convicted of election fraud.

Michigan- The Reverend Edward Pinkney is running for Congress despite being in prison on a probation violation for election fraud.

Texas- A statewide shakedown has netted 61 weapons, 52 tobacco products, 14 discoveries of money and 120 cell phones, one of which death row inmates used to make 2,800 calls.

South Carolina- The state prison system wants to jam cell phone signals to stop their use by inmates, but the plan is being opposed by the Federal Communication Commission.

Total Supervised Population on November 5, 2008: 23,664
On November 5, 2007 the population was 23,835
Did You Know?...

Did you know is an informational column written by the Facilities Management and Engineering Unit, aimed at increasing your knowledge of issues in our everyday lives. If you have any questions or an idea for a future column please contact Director David Batten at 860.692-7554. This article was written by Jay Harder, PFE1, District 1 FM&E. Jay.Harder@po.state.ct.us

Comets, What They Are and Where They Come From

Last Winter I went out one evening with a cousin and my homemade telescope to a remote site in the Berkshires of Massachusetts just to get a glimpse of the Comet Holmes. As the evening grew darker, I could make out in the North Eastern sky a light grey fuzzy ball which shouldn’t be there and knew immediately it had to be the Comet Holmes. My initial sighting was by naked eye but a quick look with binoculars confirmed it to be my primary reason for observing that night. Once my scope was set up I was able to look at Comet Holmes under high magnification and what a sight. If you can imagine my field of view was about the size of a quarter and the comet was about the size of a dime within that quarter. Amateur astronomers had been observing Comet Holmes as a very faint comet passing around the sun and heading back out into the solar system when it suddenly exploded and became a million times brighter in literally a few days. There was a bright grey core and then a huge, what appeared to be a cloud, around the core. I could see background stars shining through the cloud almost to the core. This was one of those “once in a lifetime” events in astronomy you will never forget.

I became so fascinated with Comet Holmes I decided to do a little research on it and, in turn, comets in general. What are Comets? I’m sure most people know they are “dirty snowballs” but where did the “dirty snow” come from? The answer is, when our solar system started to coalesce from a huge cloud of gas and dust about 4.5 billion years ago there was, among other elements, water in the form of ice. As the planets took shape they swept up all the elements in their neighborhoods including the water. Most of the planets in our solar system show evidence of some form of water. In the area of our solar system where planets did not form, space out beyond Neptune called the “Kuiper Belt” and even further into space in an area astronomers refer to as the Van Oort Cloud, the ice started to clump together along with whatever debris was there. Dust, rock, ice, etc. Astronomers today feel there could be as many as one trillion comets in the Oort Cloud. In the early formation of Earth it was bombarded with comets and scientists believe that is where much of the water on Earth came from.

see Comets page 7
Brooklyn C.I.’s Haunted House

New England has a long and hallowed (excuse the pun) tradition of spirits, ghosts, and haunted houses. So it should be no surprise that the Department of Correction also lays claim to its very own haunted house, and its very own ghost. At Brooklyn Correctional Institution the mention of the name “Walter” brings, at best, instant recognition to all that work there, and, true fear to staff who swear to have encountered him.

As many legends go, hard facts are difficult to come by. The consensus of those questioned at Brooklyn is that the spirit of Walter inhabits the attic of the old Windham County Jail building. Built in 1896, prisoners have not been housed there since the early 1990’s when the new facility was built.

“You could not pay me enough money to go in there alone at night,” said Correctional Plumber Dennis Sposato. A 24-year employee of the Department, most of which have been at Brooklyn, Sposato has had several strange encounters in the old jail.

Some say that Walter was an inmate, who committed suicide during his imprisonment. However, Sposato claims that Walter was not an inmate, but rather a county employee who died while at work. Many of the spooky tales such as sounds of footsteps, lights being turned on mysteriously, or unintelligible voices in the distance can be explained away by any number of logical explanations (wind, overactive imagination, woodland creatures seeking shelter, etc.). Yet to those who have experienced these phenomenon, there is no dissuading them of what they believe.

“That place creeps me out,” said Correctional Counselor Michael Shikoluk. Approximately two years ago, Shikoluk, a newly hired Correctional Officer, was inside the old jail, on second shift, conducting a fire watch because the electrical fire alarm system had failed. Armed with only a flashlight, alone in the dark building, Shikoluk heard beeping coming from the abandoned control center. As he approached to investigate, the beeping stopped—he returned to his post. Three more times he heard beeping; each time as he approached the noises ceased. “There was no one else in the building,” he added.

Among the most chilling of “ghost” stories comes from Mr. Sposato, who several years ago found himself in the attic of the building. Something caught his eye outside the window, and he turned to look at it. “All of a sudden I felt a hot hand on my shoulder, it was so hot if felt like it was almost burning me,” Sposato said. “I got out of there as fast as I could.”

Though many of the stories are downplayed as “old wives tales” by some of the staff, there are those who are reluctant to go into the building alone, even during the daytime.

For his willingness to talk about his experiences in the old jail, Sposato, has taken his share of good-natured ribbing from his coworkers over the years. “I don’t care if people think I’m crazy,” he said. “I know what I’ve seen, I know what I felt.”
5th Annual Carl Robinson Cruise Night

For the fifth consecutive year, Rich’s Drive-In in Somers, CT hosted the annual Carl Robinson CI Cruise Night. It was a rockin’, frolickin’ fun time for those who attended. Several antique vehicles and muscle cars, along with a variety of motorcycles, were on display in the parking lot for everyone to enjoy. Carter Colby, the owner of Rich’s prepared a special menu which included “Jail House Hamburgers”, “Cell #9 Nachos”, “Seg Unit Salsa”, “Handcuff Hot Dogs”, “I’m Innocent French Fries”, etc.

Rock and Roll Music from the 50’s complemented the menu and vehicles on display. Much appreciation and thanks go to not only Mr. Colby, but also to the following for their generous donations: gift certificates from TSI/Harley Davidson; Buona Vita Restaurant; Lil Buddy’s; Big Y Supermarket; and three donated oil changes from Firestone of Enfield. In addition thanks and appreciation to the members of the QWL and Diversity Committees for their contributions from Dunkin Donuts and Starbucks. All attendees had a great time and look forward to next year’s event.

Comets continued from page 5

Occasionally one of these comets in the Kuiper Belt or Oort Cloud gets nudged out of its orbit around the sun by the gravitational pull of one of the outer planets or in collisions with asteroids or other comets. To give you an idea of the size of the Oort Cloud, astronomers feel that even a passing star could push a comet out if its orbit around our sun in the far reaches of the Oort Cloud. The sun’s nearest star neighbors are around 4.2 light years away. A light year is 5,878,625,373,183 miles, multiply that by 4 and you will have a feel for the distances I am talking about here. This distance is comparable to driving from New York, NY to Los Angeles, CA almost 8 billion times. Once a comet is “nudged” out of its orbit, the sun’s mass and gravity will exert its affect on the comet and draw it into the inner solar system, around the sun and then will be thrown back out again to the Kuiper Belt or Oort Cloud, unless of course it collides with something along the way (planet). Comets that only make it to the Kuiper Belt will most likely reenter the inner solar system someday and are called “short period” comets, Halley’s Comet is an example. Comets thrown back into the Oort Cloud are called “long period” comets and will most likely never be seen again.

Remember Comet Holmes, is a short period comet and has been through the inner solar system many times in the past but it’s normally so dim it wasn’t observed. Over a two day period last October it intensified in brightness by almost 1 million times and later was briefly the largest object in our solar system, even larger than the sun. Scientists feel this was due to either a collision with an asteroid or it erupted because of internal gas pressures. Comets like this only happen a few times in your lifetime, if you’re lucky, and I would highly encourage you to take the opportunity to view one when it presents itself. Anyone interested in amateur astronomy or would just like to take a peak through a telescope can contact me and I can lead you to a club or an event where the public is encouraged to attend.

I would like to ask one last question to you, the reader, to test your knowledge of our local solar system, more importantly the moon. Does the moon rotate on its axis? The answer might surprise you, a little clue: the moon always presents the same side towards the earth. If you think you know the answer or are stumped, my office phone number is 860-253-3648 or email me at my email address listed at the top of the article.